69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

000 the point of respecting in a light-hearted way all the superstitions of East and West combined; sometimes perplexed when they were in conflict, as happens, for example, with Friday the 13th; since in Indo-China all odd days are fairly lucky, and Friday is the luckiest day of the week. He carried a Laotian sorcerer's stick, engraved with signs and symbols enabling him to cast a rapid horoscope, but was only affected by verdicts in support of decisions he had already taken. Dupont was in a great hurry to get back to Luang Prabang, because his wife was pregnant and he was afraid that she would hurt herself on her bicycle, although he had dismantled it and had
494 hidden some essential parts. We were supposed to stay in the convoy until the Xien Khouang embranchment was reached, about a hundred miles from Luang Prabang, but Dupont said that if I had no objection we would clear off on our own at the first possible opportunity. He then made some fatalistic remarks about death and predestination.

494 At the convoy assembly-point, we found a great show of discip-
722 line. Tight-lipped officers were walking up and down examining tyres and checking guns and ammunition. Drivers were assembled and lectured on convoy discipline. A soldier's Laotian wife, being observed to be pregnant, was refused permission to travel. The infantry escort was carried in five or six lorries and as many others were loaded with supplies. A dozen jeeps were placed in the middle of the convoy, which was guarded at each end by an armoured car. Dupont was turned back when he tried to bluff his way to the head of the column behind the leading armoured car, from which position he had hoped to be able to sneak away at an early opportunity

527 Although by the time we got under way it was shortly before dawn, all Vientiane was still awake. Grinding our way through the streets we passed a *boun* in full swing with its temple-dancers still trapesing round their stage, and the magnified sobbings of a crooner not quite drowned in the roar of thirty exhausts. The streets were full of torch-carrying crowds.